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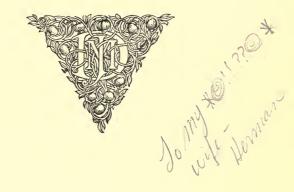








THE MASQUE OF THE ELEMENTS By HERMAN SCHEFFAUER



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TO MY DEAR FRIEND
ALBERT M. BENDER



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ARGUMENT

In this Threnody and Birth-song of the Elements, written in California some five years ago, I have striven to capture and present some of the chief factors and phases of the eternal drama of Life and Death in the Universe. These powers, elements and agents I have endowed with human attributes and human emotions as though it were Man himself who uttered himself through them.

The actors in this cosmic masque or pageant of the planets are the Sun, the Moon and the Earth with her four Elements; for stage there is the limitless background of Time and Space, and the audience may be conceived as being represented by Immanent Nature. Creation and Dissolution are her ministers, twin forces of that divine everlasting Energy which brings to pass the cycles of the Eternal Recurrence.

The action takes its course with a certain regard for the laws and revelations of Science, but this compliance is only such as poetry need observe. Despite the inherent and mystic majesty of Matter,—too commonly reviled!—fantasy must have leave, in such a work, to force its way past the barrier of facts or to reshape them to its needs.

Whether the action begin with the impulse of Dissolution or with that of Creation does not in any way affect the essentials of the plan. The alternanations of Life and Death, of Cosmic Night and Day, must inevitably follow and destroy each other, like the serpents in the ancient symbol. Yet I thought it desirable to end this work with the larger and salient note of hope and joy that rings out of the Birth that is Re-birth rather than with the Passing which is but a recurrent preparation for that Birth.

HERMAN SCHEFFAUER.

London, 1911.

THE MASQUE OF THE ELEMENTS THE PASSING



THE PASSING

The song of the Spirit of Chaos is heard on high above the aged Solar Universe

The Sun hangs in the black wastes below. His dazzling beams are shorn away. He glows, but dimly, like an ember, with a red and smouldering heat.

In their concentric rounds lie poised the planets, like weary-winged cup-bearers, circling about their sleepless lord.

His fire, dull with death, wavers across their dim faces, even unto dusky Uranus and lowering Neptune in the cold, outermost rings.

In the dark, all-surrounding void new constellations gleam on the thrones of the heavens. The old are changed, deposed or dead.

Their figures, unfixed in the abyss, have been shifted like errant sands of Earth.

The spirit of Chaos, from her uncharted tracts, summons her ministrant powers of Death and Change. She beholds them blight the worlds. Her presence enfolds destroyers and destroyed as with a cloak.

The dusks and damps of dissolution spread out their lethal and invisible wings.

The voice of the Spirit, like spheral music, flows out of the darkness.

The orbs listen and are filled with a miraculous consciousness and the soft lassitude of Death.

SONG OF THE SPIRIT OF CHAOS

The staring vessels of these worlds no wine
Of Life refills, no seeds of potent change.
So may Death's pale and lingering weeds entwine
These hollow globes that still unhindered range

Through Heaven. O famished Time! thy jaws devour
The suns and slumbers of the broken spheres,
Whose knell young stars have heard, whose rounded
hour

Strikes, and is buried in thy bourneless years.

They glow like fevered jewels in the deeps,
Like sullen embers in remorseless Night,
Like flowers with'ring when the Winter creeps
With iron dews their little lives to blight.
Since recordless immensities of Time
I stand whose ne'er-sealed eyes the birth behold
Of worlds dream-born,—their fiery infant clime,
Their teeming life, their epochs gray and cold,
Peace kiss and blot their tarnished light and close
Their leaden urns with gentleness. I shed
The ashes of my silence on their snows,—

Through the doomed Sun runs a tremor from core to crust. There is a faltering in his flight.

Then waft them to my kingdoms of the dead.

В

His vassal globes roll on, disturbed and bleak.

The Lord of Day shakes upon his central seat and turns up his hectic front in dumb questionings of despair. He yearns for sleep to seal his kingly eye.

The calcined wounds upon him are like many mouths. They roll forth trembling thunder.

And now is heard the voice of the Sun in agony:

SONG OF THE SUN

Weary am I at last! weary am I!

Shall the old eons bring me no repose?

Oh, in long-promised slumbers once to lie

And feel the films of sleep mine eyelids close!

Oh, once to lave my burning head in Night—

Blest Night! my planets joy thee—every one!

Perish, fatigueless Fire! and thou, O Light!

Vanish. Go leave your emperor, your Sun!

For I am done with blessings scattered wide

Throughout the waste, oppressive Universe,

And yonder fading Earth-globe, once my bride, Becomes to me a burden and a curse.

No more she smiles for me, no more my rays

Urge on her frozen roots to coloured bloom,

No clouds enrobe her nakedness—her days,

Once golden in the dance, are bent on doom.

A loathing throngs the vision, and the face Of Man is stone and ashen, fallen supine.

How long with Light and Love I warmed his race!

Now iron crowns of Ruin and Death be mine.

The Earth-orb and her four elements are locked in the arms of decay.

She, like a stricken mother, bereaved of all beloved things, calls on the Sun, her primal fount of Life.

The saddest of all her twilights has fallen and is moving on to night.

Life, be it of man, or beast, or flower, is slowly quenched, as a torch is quenched in a midnight lake.

The haunts and habitations of men have vanished; they are not any more. Yet their ruins are heaped with snow that shall know no thawing.

Every hour of Earth is an eon and her day has yet many hours.

Her elements sing each their song. The parent Earth sends forth her cry into the void.

SONG OF THE PLANET EARTH

Nor now thy beams arouse me morn by morn,
O Sun! as when my flesh was warm and young.
Out of our love what children fair were born
To rapture! ere thy last wild song was sung.
I deem thy day is Night and thou the Moon—
So feeble is thy kiss, so cold thy light,—
Lamp of my life, alas!—how soon, how soon—
O speak! comes thy last greeting and goodnight?

My breasts are sere as sand, no flowers bloom,

No grass, no forests hide my misery bare;

The reaches of the tyrannous poles consume

Those gardens of delight we made so fair,

And men lie dark in caves, a sullen race,

Framed of my daughter's flesh but now my bane,

Yet shall I not withdraw my patient face,

Nor tomb them in my hollow caves of pain.

Soon shall I creep no more about thee, orb

Of Heaven, for all my thews grow stark and
dry.

When the years drag me to my end—absorb, Embrace, enfold, caress me, ere I die!

A song pours down from the skies, a plangent song of triumph from the Moon. Yet it is not her voice, but that of the Moon Wraith. She reigns in mockery and malice upon her peaks in gulfs of solitude.

She sings for her who perished long ago. Her voice is flung exulting over the ruins.

The Phantasm turns the ashen sphere about the rusted poles.

The mystery of the Moon's invisible hemisphere is now revealed.

It too is desolation.

SONG OF THE MOON WRAITH

They are dying! all are dying! Night shall force
Us headlong through her shoreless regions blind.
Then must I, an empty lamp, around the corse
Of Earth my dark, unending spirals wind.
I loved the Sun. My heart was molten stone,
Like Earth my face for him with beauty bloomed,
Ere lust and hatred scarred my every zone,
And passion tore my beauty and consumed.
They are dying! I have waited lone and long,—
Long have hung, a warning skull that gleamed
Above their feast of Life and Love;—their song
Is ended, and the Sun sheds blood. They dreamed.

Earth that called me cold and pale, grows pale and cold,—

Now wearily her groaning axle turns
Those alternating glories that she rolled
To mock my ashen tombs and crater-urns!
No more her midnight ghouls nor lovers creep
To curse or bless my light; my shadow crawls
Like some dark moth upon her. I shall sleep
Equal with her in death. The tyrant falls!

The Element of Earth, waste and inert, hears at last the cry of the Mother-globe.

Her crests and peaks, her vales and plains, lie white and whelmed with snow.

The mountain ranges draw their icy shrouds over the faces of dead continents.

A convulsion seizes on her granite heart, and the lips of her hills are heard uttering their dirge.

SONG OF EARTH THE ELEMENT

Sprung molten from the fierce embrace of stars,
Graven by hungry seas and winds and fires—
Lo, my poor frame terrene with all its scars
Lies arid like the dross of blasted pyres!
Opulent fields and fruits, and forest tracts—
O fourfold largess of the seasons! grain,
Once on this bosom waving! cataracts
Poured from my heart!—each precious living
vein

Of gold or gleaming mineral, and flower
And grass and mated creature that I gave
To man unstinted from my royal dower,
Lie cold in this my never-sated grave.
And he, my noblest offspring, whom my breasts
Suckled when ushered from my fertile womb,
Lies low in dark and underearthen nests,
Calling on slow and silent-footed doom.

No more, no more the joyous spring shall thaw These crystal cere-cloths from my withered heart,— No more shall Life his golden pageant draw,

Nor ever a seed shall spring nor a flower start.

The all-embracing and tender Air is without motion, lifeless and exhaust.

His eight lordly sons lie undone in eight far regions of the globe.

Thinner and thinner grows the element as it is drained away to dissolution.

Meteors from the outer vast pierce, unconsumed, the canopy of the dying Air. The helpless Earth is smitten with showers of fire-javelins.

Sighs suffuse the atmosphere and putrescence rises with its legions of leaden ghosts.

What is this sound, so low, so faint, so thin? It seems like the first whisper of the youngest of all the Angels, or the last sigh of the oldest of all Men.

It is the Song of the dying Air.

SONG OF AIR

DEAD! dark! flown! my primal happiness;
The stark ice ribs my high and hollow cave.

The vortex of the World spins raptureless,
And languorously crawls the oily wave.

From sun-shot peaks of dawn no more I leap
Like a launching condor past control,—
O speak, Son of the West! if this be Sleep—
Or Death that is our destiny and goal?

Thick torpor clouds the climes; eternal snow
Falling, falling, falling, throngs my realm.

Shall nevermore my breath o'er Ocean blow?
Nor wrestle with his seas that roar and whelm?

No balsam to the woods can I restore,
Nor render pure my breath for man to drain;
I faint within his nostrils that implore
My draught to rouse his drooping heart

again.

My Earth that I enfolded like a bloom,

Lies but a withered creature,—sterile, cold,—

Hither, fly hither! O winds who share my doom,

Oh, wail your dying sire whose days are told.

A prone and expiring giant lifts up his bulk once more and would not die.

It is Ocean, usurper of Earth's deepest vales, besieger of islands, batterer of continents.

His great green front and land-fettered limbs glimmer up to his mistress Moon. His breast heaves unto her as of old with an awful and passionate longing.

But a film has veiled his eyes, and now stagnation builds up her muddy pillars in his heart. There Death reigns amidst havoc.

His leviathans and huge worms and wrecks of ships rot on every shore and in his dunnest deeps amidst pearls and sea-born blooms.

The innumerable myrmidons of his empire, fretted masses, chained by weeds, oppress the old Equator.

The coasts he laved and swept are marred with deadly froth. They are now but ruins of the vast poison-chalice of the sea, all fringed with bloody spume.

This is his final anguish and these his final groans. It is the last song of the sorrowing Sea!

Hoarsely reverberates his threnody; he piles up higher and higher his tremendous tomb of sound, beneath which he shall compose himself in tideless calms of sleep.

SONG OF THE SEA

Oh, I am old and hoar! so old that none
Of all my drops holds memory of birth:
My mists no longer rise to robe the Sun,
No longer lend great rivers to the Earth.
Low in my deeps my broken creatures die,—
They die! and their corruption loads my floors;
Countless and cold, my lordly monsters lie
On league-long sands of continental shores.

Where bide you, O white stallions of the waves?

And you torrential surges,—where the crest
You flung on leaping mountains that you drave
Across your father's fields from East to West?
Shine forth, O Moon! unveil thee, pallid queen!

Heal me, as when my passion clomb to thine;

Shed down thy lucent drench, thy light serene,
Oh, lift me back to Life and Love—oh,
shine!

My salt hath lost its virtue in men's blood
And o'er their hearts the marish vapour crawls;
Now Death o'erwhelms me with his colder flood,
And, prey to Time, my royal glory falls.

Dæmon of Fire, fairest of all elements, fairest, purest, divinest, Spirit of Life and Power, that dwells never with Death!

His feet take hold on Earth, but his crest rears its unhampered glory in the highest airs.

Fleeing from Nature's frozen breast, he trends to lowest crypts, swift to some final refuge, moving in leaping sheets and sinuous trails.

The mouths of all volcanoes, once his throne, are choked with snow. In subterranean corridors cold creeps upon the central vaults of flame.

SONG OF FIRE

BACK to the womb I creep, back to the womb!

Let snows and stagnant seas my province blight,

Deep down in matrix grots shall I consume

My mother's flesh, my spirit and the night.

I shall beat about her heart a few brief years,—
I, who once rolled fiery gold through all her
veins,

And soared from mountain-throats o'er hemispheres,

And throbbed in huts and palaces and fanes.

What power in me abode! what loveliness!

The three vast elements proclaimed me king,
Straight from the Sun I sank with gifts to bless
The world with living tongue and burning wing.
I came, and Man sat caverned with the brute;
I nursed him and he rose into a god;
I leave him and he withers with the fruit
Of ages on the ground his splendour trod.
Farewell, you airs and skies from whence I fell,
Fond Earth, farewell, and all thy beauty past—
And thou, old pulseless Ocean foe, farewell!—
All dead! I too shall die, though I be last.

Utter silence and utter lifelessness engulf the Globe; the frozen and adamantine bars of oblivion fall.

As the soft sibilant tones of the Fire-dæmon flutter away, slowly the spheres recede and vanish in the clasp of Night.

Once more is heard, sweet and clear, the voice of the Spirit of Chaos.

Her music of mercy sinks softly down like star-dust, or as of old dew on terrestrial flowers.

Through the infinite Universe, through Eternity, she sings her everlasting song.

She lulls her endless flocks of worlds asleep; she seals them up in the dark cycles of mutation—or makes them to bloom in the Night.

For they awaken once more when rings aloud the impulsive alternating song of the Spirit of Life, her joyful sister, clad with inevitable day.

Now the solar orbs are overcast with swift eclipse as with a mantle.

They are swept into illimitable abysses.

Above, below and all about gleam vast cohorts and constellations of living stars, pouring crystalline melody from thrones of Light.

Ghosts of worlds drift by, and suns wrapped in extinction.

They too are floating tombs, in them too, Life, Love and Thought lie sepultured like seeds.

Sepultured, until from the mighty marriage of orb with orb in planetary impact shall the great rose of Existence re-unfold its leaves in the light and warmth of suns new-born.

So follow and follow the unending successions of the Seasons of Eternity.

SONG OF THE SPIRIT OF CHAOS

DARKNESS, unconquered Darkness, spread thy tent, Silence, build up thy co-eternal wall.

Death, who art silent and dark, this firmament

Is thine, these withered worlds—Oh, take them
all!

Pearls dead and lustreless, float back to Death,—You from the sun-dust born and starry spray,
Life set you free and warmed you with his breath
A day, and Night hath fallen on that day.

Float back to Death, pearls dead and lustreless, So he may sow you on the stormy streams

C

Onward their throneless orbs that know no beams,—Blind sepulchres that hold within their stones

Ashes that sang and dust that shone with thought.

Though suns on suns emergent dash your zones

With lustre-floods,—no wonder shall be wrought,

Till out of ruins of transmuting strife

That wander unto aweful wars and press

With sister globes that weld the eternal chain, You win alternate Life and Death and Life Again . . . and again . . . and again . . .

The voice of the Spirit passes away into Immensity. Darkness and Silence in Immanence.

The unbeard rhythmical suspiration of the Universe.

Peace.

THE MASQUE OF THE ELEMENTS RE-BIRTH



RE-BIRTH

The vacant room of stars is flooded with a presence.

The tides of Life pulsate with the prophecy of Birth.

Now it is the Song of the Spirit of Creation that is heard on high above the perished Solar Universe.

The dead worlds are hidden in the lap of Night, sightless, forlorn wanderers. They move in darkness, unseeing and unseen, though smitten by the rays of living stars.

Upon their cold breasts of stone the dust of ruined worlds lies as a garment. Windless it lies as it falls or rises out of Chaos that encompasses all.

The Spirit of Creation moves grandly through the deeps. In her hands she bears Fire and Light, on her lips her all-conquering command. She flings dead

worlds among the dead, as a sower his seed or a slinger his stones.

A spark is lit in the vast obscure. A glory, a rose of fire, blooms in the pit of darkness. It is now a glowing mist with far-spread vans, a phanix wrought of flame.

The cloud gathers about it its flowing veils and swarming foam of Fire. It winds them around its white effulgent heart. The sundered flakes of crimson twist and turn, they shrink, yet do not flee.

Out of the blazing mists a new-born Sun shapes forth his awful splendour. His worlds divest themselves of robes and wings, shining in beauty white and pure.

The dead are born again and the stars rejoice in light.

From the molten orbs there comes a murmur, a fresh music to mingle with the Sun's.

The words of the Spirit of Creation swell in a harmonious storm, they mould the worlds as with hands, they sweep the plumbless spaces as with a besom of winds.

SONG OF THE SPIRIT OF CREATION

LET orb be wedded unto orb!—let light
Engender in the wombs of fiery clouds
In flashing spirals scarring the dead Night,
With tongues of argent fire and crimson shrouds.
You bear the seed of Worlds; from you shall spring

A Universe through roaring cycles spun

Round him whose bulk enormous crowns him king

And master of all vassal orbs, the Sun!

You golden worlds or white, you gelid Moons,
Each in your mountant orbit king or queen,
In midnights plunged or soaring in your noons,
Accoutred in glory male, or virgin sheen,
Awake! awake! the dark unbars her gate!
Burst forth like gems from Death's titanic tomb!
The joyous zenith and mute nadir wait,
Vessels of Life reborn, to yield you room.

Rocks and their garnered ores shall form your flesh,

And you shall pant in flowing seas of Air; You shall have boon of Waters, salt and fresh, And gift of godlike Fire to make you fair.

Afloat in splendour, panoplied in light—the arch-pontifical Sun!

He shakes his threshing, intolerable mane of flames, his face bans darkness and makes a burning void in his domains. He pours his lustihood and power upon the joyous spheres. His rays transmute all things. Through the dancing infant host his Magnificat is upborne on the breath of his desire.

Triumphant rolls his pæan. He casts from him his tempests of solar melody, vibrant and far-winged.

SONG OF THE SUN

EMBATTLED life in living light immerst,

I shed the glory of my fatherhood!

These shafts shall quell the surgent dark and burst

The walls of night that pent my circling brood.

Rolled twyfold in each shining cirque and arch,

My jewelled court of splendour ring on ring,

Salutes me down my firmamental march,

Hailing me sire, all-quickener, lord and king!

I fling eternal largesses of light

And warmth, and wave my torch within the deep,—

Dance! purple planet-children, in my sight
Around Creation's golden core! Go sweep
Within this blaze of winnowed flames, you sons
And daughters wing'd with veils of rain and fire,
Hold high your mirrored Moons!—you myrmidons
Of meteors robed with flame—you comets dire,

Far-wandering lights, go seek my brother spheres
And yonder orbs, now basking span on span;
And bear me tidings if their ripened years
Have made them joyous with the face of Man.

Emblazoned with crests of lustre like the Sun, the Earth-orb wanders singing through her rounds.

She flings her arms and tresses of Fire to the stars, a mænad in the planetary dance.

The cold voids of hungry space drink up her ardours. She glows redly; the Fires retreat into her heart and her form is clothed with lava as with the Sea. Now is she muffled in her new-born clouds and the rains struggle through her fervent Airs.

She floats, a watery globe, in the face of the Sun.

She urges up her writhing continents that smoke high unto Heaven.

And they grow green as her Seas are green. The Winds are in her hair, the Sun dowers her with riches as a bride, the Waters lace her robes with silver cords.

The tributary seasons begin their march, laden with store of beauty.

The stately sphere lifts up her chant, measured unto her dance in majestic tides of rhythm:

SONG OF THE PLANET EARTH

Again before thee winding, O Sun, at length,—
At length, thou call'st me from the wintry deep!
With cornucopian Fire thou giv'st me strength,
Caresses and golden hours and grace of sleep.
My filial song I weave with theirs who roll
Afar or close, past thy celestial face,
My sister lamps that o'er the Zodiac's scroll
From fane to fane in adoration pace.
The rapt Equator's crimson cincture holds
Me close; my emerald ocean-robes flow free,
And purple soar my mountains, folds on folds,
With vale and plain. My bondmaid Moon to me

Reveals her marbled snow in cusp and shale—
Whilst in my flinty womb the valiant strife
Of Fire proclaims me thine and bans the pale
Usurper Death beyond my fields of Life.
In Winds that wrap my path, lo, I shall sing
To thee a choral eternal, Lord of Days,
And Life with myriad hearts in me shall sing
Thy glory to scan forever, and chant thy praise.

The wrinkled Moon, charred by the fires of her brief youth, sits serene above the rose-blown round of Earth.

Like an aged beldam she crouches in the heavens, ashes upon her head, weaving her ancient silver magic, spelling enchantment upon the nether Sea.

She is a sybil in whom the wisdom of the worlds is garnered up. Her eyelids are heavy with the poppy.

She smiles and spins in sunlight and in shadow, weaving robes of slumber for her mistress. She holds

her shining disk on high as a mirror for her queen.

Her song is such as the watchers sing that sit by the couches of birth and death.

SONG OF THE MOON

The silvern mistress of the golden Sun,

The milk-white sister to the wine-red Earth,

My lord still smiles upon me, nor will shun

My face for hers of younger, fairer birth.

Though oft her fruitful beauty glides between

And robs me of his countenance, I will

Ne'er hate her, but yield up my borrowed sheen

To make her hallowed nights more hallowed still.

Burn then, my pale and vestal flame, make fair

The nuptials of the amorous Earth with night!

My sickle reaps the lurking stars in air,

My argent shield hangs lucent on the height.

Yet he that chafes and wounds the Earthen shores,
And flees though she embrace—the yearning Sea,—
Is shackled by my smiling and implores

My chaster, colder kiss and mounts to me.

With pearls of white enchantment I bestrew

The happy realms where lovers hunt their bliss; My ray is pale as frost and soft as dew;

My path is woven in snow through the abyss.

The ambient fluid of the Winds is born, Air is born, invisible Element, felt yet unfeeling. The fissure of the lightning leaves it unwounded, the destroying tempest undestroyed.

It is the bath of the girdled Earth, perfumed with balms and essences. It is the crystal shell whereunder Earth ripens like a fruit.

The light Winds sing as they roll in their courses, weaving the bland and passionate Airs into prophetic chords.

The Element stirs into harmony and musters into one universal voice:

SONG OF AIR

Again I clasp the pure, the passive globe,

Her delving valleys and each granite range,—

The Sun and Heaven's bent azure form my robe:

With me the Oceans rove, the cloudlands change.

Once more the quarters of the world I part,

And part those quarters 'twixt my princely sons

And pennoned fowl! Let lark and eagle dart!

And warbling flocks fill my dominions!

Son of the South! bring perfume, nard and spice,

Lade all thine amorous burdens on my gales:—

Thou that the Pole-star wooest, mailed in ice,

Let swarm thy snow-white bees upon these

O West Wind, from each rude and swooping wing

Shake forth thy salty tempests, from the plains Transport me healing! Golden Orient, sing, And fan me with thy murmurous painted vanes.

O whirlwinds, rash and rude! O headlong wrath
Of your unbridled and cyclonic staves!
Shall man yet tread you like some earthly path?
Shall I, your king, wear shackles like his slaves?

Lord of all waters, Ocean, wrapped in emerald robes, clasps and usurps the world.

The flagrant arrows of the Sun shower on his glancing mail. The estray Winds are wanton with his locks. His mutinous waves whisper each to each, and leap and sink.

Desire irresistible roves within his heaving deeps. Life wields a goad in every drop.

He decks his floods for the face of the Moon, and enlaces them with chains of shackled pearls and bands of foam.

He sends his salty breath aloft and wreathes the Sun with clouds. But his mists return again, falling as tears upon his face.

Inert in the profounds the blind bathybus lies. Fecundity flings her seeds and spores into the glazed abysses, and

they teem. There is a heaving in the broken, sunless bottoms; the continents and islands are upcast, rugged and black, shaking the roaring Seas from their flanks.

The labour and song of the Sea begin; the billows repeat it to the lips of the infant land.

SONG OF THE SEA

FLOW, Waters! spread afar my zones of green,
So I with salt baptismal waves may haunt
And bathe the new-sprung continents terrene,
Hearing my freshets and young rivers chaunt.
O white-armed children of mine elder waves,
Behold what golden lands lie in your sight!
Bellow! you molten thunders, in my caves,
You whales, gush forth your fountains of delight!
Dance, merfolk and mad dolphins, dance the Seas,—
My watery palace-halls are deep and wide,

And Earth hath quaffed mine emerald wine whose lees Shall make her shores teem fertile. O'er my tide,

D

The ermine of my surges and the flags

And mews lie dense, and pearls sleep in my
breast.

The coral burns upon my darkest crags,

And the slow, mountant atoll knows no rest.

My leman fair, the charmèd Moon, bends low

To draw me with her webs of mute desire,

And lo! beyond her magic empires glow

Pale fires of sunrise and red sunset fire!

SONG OF EARTH THE ELEMENT

Earth, the Element, mute, impassive, primal, lies shaped to valley, plain and peak. Enwombed in her, the ancient vast fertility lives on.

Her veins are charged with promise and birth, exhaustless quickenings of her eager flesh. She drinks from rocky bowls where lakes lie spread, from twining rivers and living streams.

She pours her virgin vigour through fields no plow

has riven. In darkness granite-ribbed, she prisons her mineral hoards.

She lies as a garment upon the Mother-sphere; her feet trespass on Ocean.

Her heart is fretted with Fire, her flanks by the Seas, her brows by Sun and Wind.

In patience and sweet sufferance she lies, substance, nurse and genetrix of Life.

Her Song is heard, a mutter of music, low yet coalescent in slow estrangement from her lips.

I WAKE again!—O dauntless peaks that stand,
Watch-towers to all the Heavens—O vales that
lie,—

See where I rise or stretch, the lusty land
Checks Seas and winnows Winds and frets the sky.
Deep in my vaulted heart and womb of fire,

And in the domes and chambers of my breasts,
The seeds of Life glow teeming—O Sun-king, sire!

Arch-quickener of Existence, gild these crests;—

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Scatter thy warmth till harvest clothe these plains,
And I shall broider me in bridal dreams,
Yea, light my feast with blazonry, my veins
Leap like my crystal and tellurian streams.
In me bright blooms and golden fruitage blown
Shall mark where errant, immortal summers creep,
And man that is flesh of me, in every zone
Build jewelled towns where quick and dead shall
sleep.

O fixed and faithful through the seasons round,
The throne of Earth, her sceptre and her loom,
Are mine, with mute, maternal glory crowned,
In me all Life shall flower, all Death re-bloom!

Child of the Sun, unmastered and insurgent pulse of Life; breath of the empyrean, seraph winged with ardours and with loveliness!

Comes Fire, pontiff celestial, King of Elements, errant angel, that basks and rejoices in his spaces.

He comes and takes from darkness and cold their

undivided victories. Out of the famished sands he leaps, out of the crater's maw.

The genius of flame winds on, touching the peaks with consecration. His red and golden nakedness is crested with his sable clouds of hair.

Upward and onward he aspires. His crimson vans are spread against the heavens, his torches flutter, making glorious the funerals of the day. His feet are a scourge across the soil; his arms are lifted to the stars.

Co-eval with them he burns and sings with a thousand tongues.

SONG OF FIRE

A FETTERLESS, bright spirit, wing'd and pure,
Soul from all souls of Suns in essence bred,
Lo! Fire am I,—without me shall endure
No Life, nor plant nor creature lift its head.
In burning beards of comets red I float;
I dance with lambent torches on the stars;

I wash with sulphurous flame the roaring throat
Of peaks, and blaze beneath the thunder's cars.

Master of Earth am I;—on her my will
I stamp, and with fierce searing kisses press
My passion on her naked flesh and thrill
Her hidden veins with rapture. My caress
Is lustral. In her lovers' hearts I creep
And tip with fateful coals the prophet's tongue;
God-like from lips of poets I sing and leap,—
I the eternal fair, the eternal young!

And none shall conquer me save they who call
My strength to sovereign toil in craft or strife;
With me shall tribes of men hold festival,—
Cities and realms shall find me Death or Life.

Repossessed of their ancient heritage, the four conqueror Elements sit on their dowered spheres.

Wind, Ember, Current, conscious Earth, the eternal weavers and toilers, labour in felicity.

Chaos and Night and Death are disenthroned. The

system burns along its orbits through the dark. The benisons of the stars and suns are cast upon these youngest worlds.

Buoyant and blithe the planets wheel.

Their year-long arcs and each season's ordained processional are portioned unto them: their vassal moons also, and the speed of their turning and their measure of night and day.

The ruddy jocund Earth presses close to the Sun, timorous of the outer void, baring her bosom to his kiss.

Has not the inevitable and recurrent Spring of Existence come unto her once again? The iron shackles of Silence—are they not broken?—the granite of the Night, is it not crumbled low?—the ice of Death, is it not molten?

She blooms in her resurrection; her voice is lifted in the universal litary to Life. She rolls in her golden garniture of beams, circling with the singing sisterspheres. Her rondure floats against the distant cohorts of the constellations.

The ancient Spirit of Chaos swings her pitchy cressets, and sinks down the starless deep on her tall catafalque of Death.

Rejoice, O orb vestured in beauty! Put forth thy wings, thy coronals of Love, wrap thee with fluctuant Winds and exulting Seas!

Shall thy offspring feel dismay, knowing what light shall burst from dark, what life leap from Death, what flowers blow from dust?

So the anointed and belted spheres, re-risen from their bath of silence and their sleep of time, move on companioned with eternal hope.

The fingers of the Sun stroke forth a glorious strain; the worlds are shawns and cymbals for his minstrelsy.

The Spirit of Creation pours forth her victorious baptismal harmonies.

Triumphantly her music daunts the firmament and echoes against the dusks of the Unapproachable.

SONG OF THE SPIRIT OF CREATION

ONCE more the soft, terraqueous chaunt I hear
In choral, and the nuptial planet-dance
I mark. With puissant sceptre o'er each sphere,
Life thrones in music and in wonder's trance.
Hail! vessels solar and terrestrial, hail!

Whose prows shall cross the dim, celestial bars With helm siderial and cloudy sail,

Bannered with youth and lanterned with the stars. What fates for ballast? by what voices grim

And laughters urged, your astral course I mark,— Warped to what ports remote your hulks shall swim

Or anchor silent in what stagnant dark?

Mine arms have raised you from the cosmic deep;

Now Fire hath sprent his jewelled drops and sown

Marvellous seeds whence beauty's plants shall creep Season to season weaving, zone to zone.

Now sacerdotal Love shall shape and dye
His forms within the house of joy and tears,
And Birth shall bless and Death shall sanctify
Earth's passion and her pageant through the years.

Down the everlasting, unchangeable cope the hymnal of Life is reft away.

But its music is showered over Earth.

It is prisoned in the sea-shells; the flowers garner it in their chalices.

It stirs in the heart of Man.

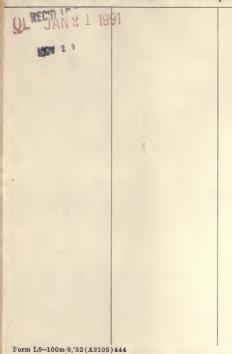
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